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ABSTRACT

Recent environmental events have produced an awareness of the problems caused by developing societies. Because of this, many feel that there is an increasing need to include environmental aspects in school lessons on a regular basis. This pamphlet focuses on an in-service program developed as a result of the efforts of a conference arranged in 1984 by the Danish Ministry of Education in cooperation with the Ministry of the Environment. The purposes of the conference were to draw attention to the need to give people a thorough knowledge of environmental issues; to draw attention to the social significance of the appreciation of nature, and to contribute to the debate related to the teaching of environmental education in elementary and junior high schools. Discussed are: (1) the central concerns of environmental education; (2) the purpose of an inservice program; (3) form and content of the inservice course; (4) study materials; (5) organizational structure; and (6) timetable. (CW)

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Environmental Education in Denmark

Nation-wide INSET program for school teachers 1988/89

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The Royal Danish School of Educational Studies

The Royal Danish School of Educational Studies (Danmarks Lærerhøjskole, in the following: DLH) is a State institution for in-service training and post-graduate education of teachers in the "Folkschool" (elementary and lower secondary school, grades 1-10) and teachers in teacher training colleges. In addition to the teaching activities, the institution has research obligations corresponding to those at the Department of Education at universities in most other countries. DLH serves the entire nation and consists of the main branch in Copenhagen and 7 provincial branch institutions.

Introduction

During the past few years, a series of local, national, and international events have produced an increasing awareness of the problematic development of the relation between society and its natural basis. The serious drought and hunger-catastrophies in Africa, the soil erosion and destruction in Latin America, and the extreme deforestations in Asia as well as in Latin America are clear signs of this development.

The high level of energy consumption in industrialized countries gives rise to considerable problems. The nitrogen polution from agriculture, problems with waste disposal and waste water, air polution, and the depletion of the seas are some of the features which point towards a critical development in the relation between nature and culture.

Everybody is forced to face these problems. In the light of this, the appearance of the increasing need to include environmental aspects in school lessons is comprehensible. The occurrence of a large number of national and international meatings and conferences on environmental education, clearly reveals this requirement.

In 1984 the Danish Ministry of Education and the Ministry of the Environment co-operated to arrange a conference, the purpose of which reflects the need for environmental teaching, but also the uncertainty as to the content of the teaching and how, and to what extent, it ought to be included in school at the elementary level. (grades 1-10)

The main objects of the conference were, among other things:

- to draw attention to the fact that a thorough knowledge among people is essential, provided that the future environmental problems are to be solved on a democratic basis.
- to draw attention to the fact that the social significance of the appreciation and awareness of nature, of considerations of the environment and of resource management will increase.
- to contribute to a debate on the extent of environmental teaching in the relevant subjects in grades 1-10.

A rapid dissemination of environmental teaching implies an extensive further education of school teachers. Thus DLH has decided to prepare an in-service teachers' training programme, which will cover the whole country and is planned to run during the autumn 1988 and the spring 1989 .

In the light of the somewhat unclarified status of environmental teaching we have designed the in-service programme to be run as a number of educational development studies.

The Central Concerns of Environmental Education

Crucial to environmental education are various social interests connected to the man-nature relation.

Environmental education is interdisciplinary, problem-oriented and implies action.

In uncovering the interrelationship between the various perspectives of environmental problems, through a combination of the humanities, the social and the natural sciences, these problems are perceived as part of a wider social context.

The environmental teaching aims at helping the pupils to see the environmental problems from many angels as well as to reach a more active, analytic, and democratic consideration of environmental problems.

The Purpose of the In-service Programme

The purpose of the in-service programme is to develop educational experiences in implementing teaching, based upon local environmental problems, at different class levels as well as to draw up materials for environmental teaching for the local educational authorities.

The Form and Content of the in-service Course

The environmental education will take place in study groups composed of teachers from each educational district. The teachers will work together on the educational development study. A typical study group might be composed of 2-4 teachers from each of the 4-5 schools within the district.

The groups will be supplied with educational material and supported by an adviser from DLH.

The programme aims at bringing the pupils out of the classroom and to make them and their teachers use the local environment as a source in their work in the same way as the use of more traditional teaching materials.

The participating teachers are supposed to carry out experimental teaching with their own classes during the course, and the experiences from this is to be drawn into the work of the study group.

The programme is to be run locally which will enable each provincial branch, to mould the course into a form and direction that will fit into the specific traditions and wishes of each district.

52 lessons will complete the course, which might conveniently be separated into three phases as follows:

Phase 1: Autumn 1988. 21 classes

An introductory phase, characterized by studies and discussions of more generel aspects of environmental teaching. This phase terminates with the choice of issue and the planning of teaching.

Phase 2: Autumn 1988. 10 classes.

During this phase the experimental teaching will be carried out at the schools involved. The classes will be of an advisory character and will involve discussions of the ongoing teaching in the schools.

Phase 3: Spring 1989. 21 classes.

With the support of the advisers from DLH, the locally gained experience will be recorded during this phase, and educational materials, for teachers and schools not involved in the project, will be drawn up.

Study Materials

The study materials will consist of a book of "Perspectives" and a book of "Examples".

The book of "Perspectives" will attempt to throw light on essential general and theoretical features of environmental issues and of environmental teaching. The idea with the book of "Perspectives" is to provide the participating teachers with a serious background and to support them with perspectives during the implementation of the teaching.

The book of "Examples" will be drawn up on basis of a number of experiments with environmental teaching (pilot-projects) which will be carried out all over the country. The experimental teaching will take place at all class levels and a variety of environmental issues will be dealt with. Thus, the book will consist of tangible descriptions of the experiences from the finished pilot-projects. The descriptions will include the purpose and content of the teaching, advantages and disadvantages of the applied methods and materials, and a listing of institutions, authorities, trades, and industries who have been willing to contribute to the implementation of the projects.

Organisational Structure

Secretariat

The secretariat consists of two senior lecturers, both working full time on the Environmental Education Programme and a half time secretary.

Apart from a number of practical functions the secretariat is responsible for the general co-ordination of the project.

The Work group

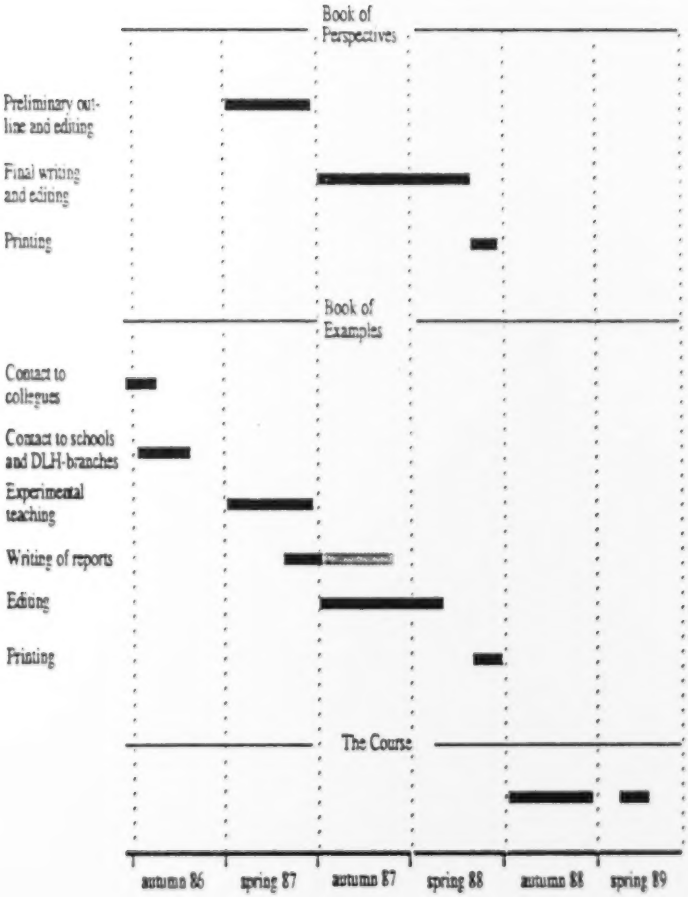
The work group consists of teachers and researchers. The part of the work group, consisting of staff members attached to DLH in Copenhagen, makes decisions about general questions relating to the preparation of the programme. Simultaneously, they act as pilot-project advisers and as editors or authors of the study materials. The teachers act as advisers for pilot-projects and possibly as authors.

The Forum

A broad advising forum, who inspires and follows the work through mutual discussions about the content and structure of the programme. One or two meatings are arranged each half year.

Apart from representatives from DLH, the participants in this group come from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Environment, the teachers' union, a parents' organization and representatives from various municipal and county councils.

Timetable


Book of Perspectives
Preliminary outline and editing
Final writing and editing
Printing
Book of Examples
Contact to collegues
Contact to schools and DLH-branches
Experimental teaching
Writing of reports
Editing
Printing
The Course
autumn 86
spring 87
autumn 87
spring 88
autumn 88
spring 89

Comments on the Timetable

The Book of "Perspectives"

One member of the secretariat and two members of the work group constitute the editorial group, which is responsible for the composition of the book of "Perspectives". The book will mainly be written by members of the work group and the group of editors.

The preliminary outline and the first drafts of manuscripts will be ready during the spring 1987, which will enable the work group to consider the drafts and the editorial structure in the early spring. The final writing and editing of the book will take place in a continuous dialogue between the authors, the rest of the work group, and the editors during autumn 1987 and spring 1988. The book will be printed in summer 1988.

The Book of "Examples"

An application to variuos DLH staff members, the DLH provincial branches, and schools, initiated the organization of the pilot projects[1] .

DLH advisers and groups of teachers, covering subjects within science and the arts, co-operate to organize and carry out the experimental teaching.

The first drafts of the reports are expected to be ready in June 87. The final reports are expected to be ready during the Spring 1988.

The group responsible for editing the book of "Examples", is constituted of one member of the secretariat and one member of the work group.

[1]The pilot-projects receive support from The EEC European Year of the Environment

Participating schools

1 Sindal skole, Sindal
2 Ankermedets skole, Skagen
3 Karensmindeskolen, Støvring
4 Nordre skole, Silkeborg
5 Brændgårdskolen, Herning
6 Vestervangskolen, Esbjerg
7 Tønder Statsseminarium, Tønder
8 Skjoldborgvejens skole, Fredericia
9 Tønder kommuneskole, Tønder
10 Egtved skole, Egtved
11 Mølkærskolen, Munkebo
12 Bellingeskolen, Odense
13 Hagested skole, Holbæk
14 Holmegaardskolen, Næstved
15 Vor Frue skole, Næstved
16 Dyrholmskolen, Herlev
17 Herlev skole, Herlev
18 Søndervangskolen, Glostrup
19 Rødovre skole, Rødovre
20 Korsager skole, Copenhagen
21 Tingbjerg skole, Copenhagen
22 Skolen på Islands Brygge, Copenhagen

DANMARK. AMTS-OG KOMMUNEINDDELING

EFTER GEODÆTISK INSTITUT
GEOGRAFISK INSTITUT VED
DANMARKS LÆRERHØJSKOLE

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